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Annual report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund to the Economic and Social Council

Note by the Secretariat

1. In its decision 2001/3 of 22 January 2001, the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) requested the Executive Director to transmit the document entitled "Annual report to the Economic and Social Council" (E/ICEF/2001/4 (Part I)), together with the comments made by delegations at the first regular session of the Board, to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its substantive session of 2001.

2. Part one of the present document contains the annual report of the Executive Director. Part two contains the summary of deliberations of the Executive Board on the annual report of the Executive Director.

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Part one
Annual report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council*

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* Originally issued as document E/ICEF/2001/4 (Part I).

I. Implementation of the reform programmes of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review

A. Structures and mechanisms

1. The mechanisms for improved coordination of the United Nations system continue to converge and reinforce one another. The instruments and frameworks in which UNICEF is now involved include the Common Country Assessment (CCA)/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Strategic Framework, sector investment programme (SIP), system-wide approach (SWAP), Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). These, combined with the plans of action from recent special sessions of the General Assembly and various international conferences, as well as the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the outcome of consideration of the Report of the Panel of the Secretary-General on United Nations Peace Operations, have helped to ensure that UNICEF and its partners in the United Nations system work together in a coordinated and collaborative manner.

2. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG), with the full and active participation of UNICEF, now has a leading role in the development of mechanisms for improving coordination of field-level operational activities under the leadership of host Governments. UNDG was further strengthened recently when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced its intention of joining the group on matters related to the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, thereby joining the World Health Organization (WHO) and several other specialized agencies in developing a closer relationship with UNDG. Evolving from its original structure as a management tool of the United Nations, UNDG now increasingly serves as a focal point for system-wide issues. Both the Girls' Education Initiative, led by UNICEF, and the Poverty Eradication Initiative, led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are being implemented within this expanded UNDG framework. In the newly restructured Administrative Committee on Coordination machinery, a High-Level Programme Committee will provide broad guidance and oversight of coordination and effective programme implementation for the system, and will do so through existing mechanisms, including, specifically, UNDG.

3. UNDG now operates within an annual work plan and meeting schedule established up to a year in advance, greatly facilitating the participation of principals, particularly from agencies not headquartered in New York. The working group structure of UNDG is subject to annual review, thereby ensuring relevance, specific task assignments and accountability for results. With respect to the broad sharing of information and knowledge, the UNICEF Programme Knowledge Network and the United Nations Resident Coordinator Network (RC Net) are established Internet sites which allow UNDG members to learn from experiences, rapidly share lessons and relevant documents, and hold an interactive exchange among field and headquarters staff.

4. UNICEF is now a member of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, complementing its long-standing membership in UNDG and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs.

Problems and lessons learned

5. With UNDG taking action on issues of field-level coordination, it has been important to ensure that the specialized agencies do not feel pre-empted in the operations of the resident coordinator system. This potential problem has been eased by UNDG involving external partners in its work where there are potential system-wide implications, and by formal recognition by the Administrative Committee on Coordination of the system-wide role which UNDG can play in developing structures to support country-level operations. Within the context of broader system-wide initiatives, such as the Task Force on the Horn of Africa, led by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDG members are actively promoting the concept of a development group with shared perceptions of challenges and common views on how to address them.

6. UNDG members, and the system as a whole through the Administrative Committee on Coordination machinery, have recognized the need to avoid the proliferation of structures. UNDG has instituted an annual review of working groups and the preparation of

annual work plans for each. Through exercises such as the Administrative Committee on Coordination review, the role and need for existing structures is under regular scrutiny, and where UNDG can provide a needed service, it is being designated for a broader system-wide role. The Committee has also recognized the potential problem of a proliferation of instructions to field offices. Therefore, emphasis is being placed on assuring a clear "value added" for notes, declarations and other guidelines sent to the field.

7. The review and analysis of feedback from field offices is crucial in improving coordination. Guidance in annual report preparation for both UNICEF representatives and resident coordinators is now designed to elicit input on coordination issues in a consistent format. The review of these reports is providing information on lessons learned. The annual reports of the resident coordinators are being considered when preparing performance appraisals. In recognition of the importance of the views of field representatives to the success of any coordination mechanism, there is ample provision for feedback of views by UNICEF country representatives through annual reports, regional management team meetings (where UNDG issues are a permanent fixture on agendas), and such electronic means as the RC Net and the UNICEF Programme Knowledge Network.

Recommendations

8. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Take note* of the work accomplished to date and encourage the funds and programmes to continue their implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review recommendations;

(b) *Encourage* the funds and programmes to keep Member States apprised of developments relating to UNDG activities;

(c) *Reaffirm* the need for continued, close cooperation between UNDG members and the other members of the United Nations system.

B. Funding and resources

9. The introduction of the funding meeting at the first regular session of 2000 of the Executive Board has led to a number of positive outcomes:

(a) Predictability of current-year regular resources has increased, with a much earlier indication of the likely availability of funds from a larger number of Governments;

(b) UNICEF ability to effectively manage its resources has improved, with the availability of payment schedules from 13 Governments;

(c) Predictability of future-year resource availability has also improved, with eight Governments providing either firm or tentative pledges for the next two years;

(d) There has been some improvement in burden sharing among donors.

10. It remains a source of concern, however, that in actual dollar amounts, the contribution of Governments to UNICEF regular resources is declining and has done so since 1996, when the total regular resource income from Governments was $364 million. This compares to $344 million in 1999, and indications are that the amount will be lower still in 2000.

11. In sharp contrast to this trend, there is strong growth in earmarked contributions from Governments, which increased from $243 million in 1996 to $343 million in 1999. These contributions are expected to be significantly higher in 2000.

12. While earmarked contributions are essential for expanding the reach and depth of country programmes, unless core resources enjoy a similar rate of increase, the ability of UNICEF to be effective and efficient as the world's multilateral organization for children will be eroded.

Recommendations

13. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Encourage* Member States to increase their annual voluntary contributions to core resources;

(b) *Encourage* Governments in a position to do so to provide multi-year commitments and payment schedules at the funding meeting at the first regular session of the Executive Board in 2001.

C. Resident coordinator system

14. UNDG has continued to give high priority to strengthening and improving the resident coordinator system. As of November 2000, UNICEF had three staff serving as resident coordinators (in Botswana, Namibia and Tanzania), two of whom are women. Overall, of the 130 occupied resident coordinator posts, 32, or 25 per cent, are held by women. It is anticipated that this percentage will increase during the course of 2001, with a series of measures adopted to promote the representation of women. At present, approximately half of the candidates in the competency assessment exercise are women. Despite best efforts, the number of resident coordinators from outside UNDP remains low, less than 20 per cent of the total.

15. The Executive Director has instructed all UNICEF representatives to include in their work plans activities that relate to their responsibilities as members of United Nations country team; this will form part of annual performance appraisals. As part of their annual reporting requirements, UNICEF representatives must assess the functioning of the country team, including the availability of a work plan and the adequacy of annual reporting.

Recommendations

16. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Reaffirm* the need for a more broadly based pool of resident coordinators, with improved gender balance;

(b) *Reaffirm* the important role of the annual report and work plan of the resident coordinator, and the need for a fully consultative process in their preparation.

D. Implementation of the Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework

17. The CCA and UNDAF are essential tools for the resident coordinator system, to translate the broad objectives of the United Nations system into operational results with an impact on beneficiaries. In addition, the CCA has value as a stand-alone exercise and product to provide a basis for other frameworks, such as the Strategic Framework, the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP), the CDF and the PRSP.

18. UNICEF has continued to lead the UNDG Sub-Group on Programme Policy, furthering the CCA/UNDAF process. UNDG had established an ambitious schedule, calling for a total of 32 countries to have completed or have in-progress UNDAFs at the end of 2000, with a total of 43 by the end of 2001. It was envisaged that 57 countries would have completed CCAs by the end of 2001, with a further 55 CCAs in progress. A total of 26 CCAs and UNDAFs are scheduled for completion by the end of 2001. The CCA and UNDAF Learning Network was established as a system-wide mechanism through which the processes are reviewed, so as to identify and share lessons and good practices. The findings of the Learning Network are regularly posted on RC Net (www.dgo.org).

19. During 2000, UNICEF accelerated the pace of integration of the CCA/UNDAF process into the programme planning and preparation process (PPP). There is now a module on United Nations reform and CCA/UNDAF incorporated into the PPP training manual. Extensive orientation and guidance are provided to UNICEF representatives during regional management team meetings and through special orientation programmes and workshops for programme coordinators/officers in country offices. UNICEF is in the midst of an analysis of impact of the UNDAF/CCA process on UNICEF programming in the countries scheduled for roll-out in 1999 and 2000.

Problems and lessons learned

20. A survey of country offices revealed several difficulties in meeting the original roll-out schedule. Division directors of UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF were instructed to prepare an action plan for improving the situation. It was concluded that, while there is strong commitment to the implementation of the CCA/UNDAF instruments, the pressure on country offices for completion of individual agency country programmes has reduced the time and resources available for work on system-wide instruments. In some cases, the timing of the CCA/UNDAF has been such that they are not prepared until after critical dates for completion of agency country programmes. Delays have also resulted where there is a lack of country team ownership or effective team leadership.

21. Several actions have now been identified to improve and accelerate the introduction of effective CCA/UNDAFs. UNDG leadership has urged all regional bureaux, divisions and offices of UNDG Executive Committee members to take more proactive and progressive action and follow-up. The UNDG Office (UNDGO) has begun more intensive monitoring and provides monthly status reports through RC Net. A UNDG Working Group on Harmonization and Simplification of Programming Processes and Approval, chaired by UNFPA, will propose concrete steps for streamlining of processes, including internal processes of Executive Committee members, and for the integration of CCA/UNDAF into their respective programming procedures. Increased use is being made of "best practices", particularly using effective CCA/UNDAFs as models for other countries to follow. Further reviews are being held to identify the characteristics of a successful CCA/UNDAF process.

Recommendations

22. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Take note* of the progress on implementation of the CCA/UNDAF process and urge funds and programmes to continue to review their programming processes, with a view to streamlining, simplification and the reduction of time requirements;

(b) *Reaffirm* the lead role of Governments and urge all members of the country team to participate actively in the CCA/UNDAF process.

E. Harmonization of programmes and procedures

23. Some 93 qualifying programme countries now have harmonized programme cycles, and by 2004, 90 per cent of them will be harmonized. This represents a major milestone for the UNDAF roll-out and will have a major impact on operations by UNDG member agencies in the field.

24. In support of the process, several guidance notes have been sent to field staff. The initial UNDG note on "Definitions of Processes and Products for Enhancing UNDG Programme Collaboration" clarified programming terminology. This note provided common definitions of terms used in programming. A further UNDG guidance note for the "Preparation of Joint Programmes/Projects" was sent to the field in July 2000. United Nations country teams are encouraged to use the guidance note when developing and managing joint programmes/projects and to share with UNDG the results of their experience.

25. Procedures for joint mid-term reviews of country programmes/UNDAFs have been completed and are now being field tested by a number of country teams. It is expected that revised procedures will be available in the first quarter of 2001. When programme cycles have been harmonized, a joint mid-term review of individual country programmes and UNDAF will lessen demands and burdens placed on the Government in participating in individual country programme reviews.

26. Simplified and harmonized administrative procedures for national project personnel hired by different United Nations agencies are being reviewed by a UNDG ad hoc group, based on current practices of selected country teams. These procedures include, for example, salary scales, daily subsistence allowance rates, contractual and recruitment modalities, insurance coverage and performance assessment methods. Guidance notes will be sent to all country teams by the end of 2000.

Problems and lessons learned

27. A high degree of programme harmonization has now been achieved by the UNDG agencies, and steps are in place to accelerate the pace of CCA/UNDAF roll-out. UNICEF and its UNDG partners are exploring ways in which existing procedures and practices can be simplified, particularly to reduce the burden on country offices and national counterparts, while retaining appropriate levels of accountability and quality. Areas of particular attention will include: simplification of documentation, streamlining of reporting requirements, and the coordination of in-country milestones, e.g., mid-term reviews, initiation of country programme preparations and their completion.

Recommendations

28. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Take note* of the high degree of harmonization achieved by UNDG members;

(b) *Request* UNDG agencies to continue monitoring the harmonization of country programmes and to work towards greater consistency of all aspects of the programme cycle.

F. Gender mainstreaming and gender balance

29. UNICEF has had a goal of increasing the representation of women in professional posts to 50 per cent. High priority is placed on identifying and appointing qualified women candidates at all levels and thereby improving the imbalance in the ratio of male to female staff in the professional category.

Problems and lessons learned

30. The organizational structure of UNICEF continues to have more women than men at the P-1 and P-2 levels, slightly fewer women than men at the P-3 level, with a gradual decline in number of women through the higher levels to D-2. At the USG/ASG levels, the gender split is even. At the field level, 32 per cent of representatives and 27 per cent of assistant representatives are women, similar to 1999 figures.

Recommendation

31. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Call* for continued efforts towards the achievement of gender balance.

G. Capacity-building

32. UNICEF contributed to the preparation of the Administrative Committee on Coordination guidance note on capacity-building approved in April 2000 and circulated to all country representatives. This note, recognizing the issue as a central concern in all United Nations system operational activities, provides an agreed set of guidelines designed to highlight the importance of capacity-building in operational activities of the system.

Problems and lessons learned

33. The complexity inherent in capacity-building activities requires more systematic sharing of lessons learned within the United Nations system and working with the broadest range of partnerships and collaborative arrangements. A number of field offices have tested and used participatory techniques for capacity assessment, monitoring and evaluation; these should be shared more widely within the system, at headquarters and in the field.

34. Operational staff, particularly at the field level, require continued organizational support for their work on capacity-building programmes, including appropriate guidance, training, incentives, tailored learning, and the opportunity to exercise initiative. In addition, monitoring and evaluation activities should be focused more systematically on programme and organizational learning with respect to capacity-building. More inter-agency and thematic evaluations and assessments could usefully be undertaken.

Recommendations

35. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Encourage* the sharing of case studies and evaluations of capacity-building experiences, including frameworks and methodologies;

(b) *Encourage* forums for the wider exchange and analysis of capacity-building approaches at the inter-agency level.

H. Common premises and services

36. Updated operational guidelines for the implementation of common services, placing greater emphasis on practical guidance for procedural aspects, were sent to all country teams. These guidelines will facilitate more widespread introduction of country-level common services and cover principles of good management, criteria for selection of services, elements for an inter-agency common services agreement, information on budgeting and cost apportionment, and performance measurement indicators. UNDG now maintains a global database of common services at the country level.

37. The UNDG Sub-Group on Common Premises and Services provides information and support to country teams that are interested in pursuing the possibility of a United Nations House. There are currently 37 officially designated United Nations Houses. Although not meeting the formal criteria, many other country teams occupy shared premises. With increased connectivity and improving information technology, an additional 13 countries reported creating "Virtual United Nations Houses", and at least 44 others share elements of information technology and communications systems.

Problems and lessons learned

38. The conclusions on common premises and services as presented to the governing bodies of the UNDG Executive Committee members early 1999 in "Progress Report on the United Nations House Programme" (document DP/1999/CRP.5), remain valid.

Recommendation

39. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Take note* of the approach to common premises and services, encourage further progress, and reaffirm the requirements for shared management, transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness.

I. Cooperation with the World Bank

40. UNICEF continues to expand its partnerships with the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly the World Bank. There are regular policy and operational meetings between the World Bank and UNICEF at headquarters and country level. At the most recent global discussions, held in October 2000, particular attention was given to education, including girls' education and early childhood education; health, including safe motherhood and polio eradication; HIV/AIDS; child labour; and collaboration on the PRSP/Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative.

41. A major aspect of UNICEF relations with the World Bank is the complementarity of respective programme frameworks and collaboration in their preparations. The enhanced HIPC initiative has created an opportunity for policy dialogue and the potential for support of additional programmes benefiting children. The common position of the United Nations system at the country level, in line with the 20/20 Initiative and the overarching goal of poverty reduction, is that the bulk of savings from debt relief should be devoted to the funding of basic social services. It is envisaged that PRSPs will outline, inter alia, the major investments each eligible country would fund with the debt dividend, including the potential for practical action and specific programmes consistent with the UNICEF strategy that poverty reduction begins with children.

42. All UNICEF representatives in countries eligible only for International Development Association funding receive periodic briefs on PRSP developments. Many country offices are actively participating in the preparation of PRSPs, contributing as part of the United Nations country team and as UNICEF. UNICEF experience with community-based development is proving particularly relevant to fostering participatory PRSPs. The UNICEF contribution of multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS) is also filling essential data gaps by establishing baseline data on the social dimensions of poverty.

43. SWAPs continue to gain importance, as reflected in the growing number of countries adopting the approach. The trend is likely to continue as part of the increased attention devoted to PRSPs. UNICEF has been actively engaged in SWAP consultations at global and country levels. It is an active member of the Inter-agency Group on SWAPs and has had bilateral meetings with interested donor Governments. A survey to assess the status of SWAPs in UNICEF programme countries is currently under way. The findings of the survey and feedback from country offices and partners will be used to further improve UNICEF contributions to the formulation and implementation of SWAPs, including better information and enhanced capacity of UNICEF staff to respond to new challenges.

44. In 1999, UNICEF country representatives received a programme directive on the role of UNICEF in SWAPs, outlining the strategies for promotion of children's and women's issues and examples of collaborative activities. In October 2000, UNICEF participated in the workshop on SWAPs organized by UNFPA, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Department for International Development (United Kingdom). UNICEF has prepared an action plan outlining its strategy for supporting SWAPs and PRSPs and identifying future areas of work.

45. A United Nations system-World Bank CDF Learning Group continues to hold regular meetings as a means of exchange of information on the implementation of the CDF concept in the 12 CDF pilot countries, as well as to review jointly lessons learned from the pilot experiences. The Learning Group also serves as a forum for joint monitoring of PRSP implementation.

Problems and lessons learned

46. As the relationship with the World Bank continues to grow stronger and deeper, the need for regular exchanges of information and best practices, as

well as the review of experiences and lessons learned, becomes more pronounced.

Recommendation

47. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Take note* of and encourage efforts of UNDG members to strengthen collaboration with the World Bank and *urge* that there be maximum compatibility between the programming frameworks of the World Bank and the United Nations system.

J. Monitoring and evaluation

48. In monitoring the situation of child rights, UNICEF has made considerable progress towards the medium-term plan (MTP) commitment of clearly differentiating between activities directed towards results for children. UNICEF has joined with national partners, multilateral and bilateral agencies, academic institutions and other United Nations agencies to develop MICS for reliable data gathering. Over 60 countries are completing stand-alone MICS and 40 countries are adding MICS questionnaire modules to existing surveys. To facilitate the harmonization and consistency of the data gathering, UNICEF has sponsored the development of ChildInfo, a user-friendly technology platform which encourages informed, inclusive dialogue among stakeholders and facilitates reporting by using a variety of presentation tools, e.g., tables, graphs and maps.

49. UNICEF has engaged in assessment, analysis and evaluation of trends and policies related to achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The organization has also conducting an end-decade review to determine lessons learned, which will inform the New Global Agenda for Children.

50. With regard to UNICEF performance, the use of programme audit and self-assessment techniques has increased. Country programme management plans provide the basis for a more systematic analysis of institutional performance. The integrated monitoring and evaluation plan (IMEP) sets clear ex-ante performance expectations. Office management plans provide the basis for monitoring performance of headquarters divisions and regional offices in the accomplishment of MTP objectives.

51. Electronic networking is being used to expand the dissemination of evaluation findings and lessons learned. The UNICEF evaluation database has been assessed and is being upgraded to respond to an increasing demand for institutional learning. Also, UNICEF has supported national capacity-building for evaluation, particularly in Africa. The promotion of national evaluation associations has resulted in active information-sharing networks and the formation of some 20 national associations, all leading towards improved evaluation standards and training packages.

Problems and lessons learned

52. With a greater awareness of the need for more effective use of resources and for more transparency and accountability, there is an increasing demand for presentation of results of UNICEF activities. Traditional evaluations are being replaced by a new type of evaluation based on the added value of available information, facilitating decision-making at each level, be it the activity or project level, thematic or country programme level, or policy/governance level. This is further compounded by the need for more effective United Nations system performance, such as demonstrating the efficiency of UNDAF.

Recommendations

53. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Request* the United Nations system to set standards for the evaluation function so that it may serve well the governance, policy, programme and activity levels of management;

(b) *Request* the United Nations system to identify ways of accelerating system-wide collaboration for strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacity at the country level;

(c) *Request* all United Nations agencies to design their respective databases for evaluations and lessons learned in such a way to ensure compatibility and smooth interface among them;

(d) *Request* the United Nations system to report on the extent of progress on the harmonization of evaluation practices as requested by the Council five years ago.

K. Indicators

54. In the important area of measuring results and achievements, UNICEF is also acting in follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution E/2000/L.30 on basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation of the follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits at all levels. To this end, UNICEF is a member of the ad hoc inter-agency group, established by UNDG, which is reviewing the use of CCAs at country level, including an assessment of the use of indicators in CCAs. The first phase of this work included a request for information from United Nations country offices on the current status of their CCA and of the processes they have used to develop their indicator framework. Further action will follow receipt and analysis of the responses.

55. In relation to reporting on progress on the World Summit for Children goals, which will form the core of the report of the Secretary-General to the Special Session on Children in September 2001, UNICEF continues to support Governments in filling data gaps so that national reports can be as informative as possible in relation to the situation of the country's children.

56. UNICEF is also supporting over 60 countries that are carrying out household surveys, as well as others, in including relevant questions in existing surveys. Many of the surveys are also being supported by other United Nations agencies and partners. The indicators being used in reporting on progress are consistent with those used for the mid-decade review on the World Summit for Children, and also with indicators used for many years in monitoring progress in the nutrition, health and education areas by other agencies and by countries themselves.

II. Follow-up to international conferences

57. The follow-up to international conferences and special sessions of the General Assembly continues to be a high priority. UNICEF participates in this process in a variety of ways and at several levels. At the global level, UNICEF has participated in: (a) the coordinated overall follow-up to recent conferences; (b) individual conference follow-up and participation in reviews, through the plus-five/plus-ten process; and (c) follow-up to the World Summit for Children. Through the Administrative Committee on Coordination process, UNICEF actively participates in developing guidelines for integration of the United Nations Millennium Declaration into the work of the United Nations system. At the country level, UNICEF continues integration of goals and targets from the international conferences into the CCA/UNDAF framework and into its own programming process and operational activities.

58. In the past year, UNICEF has participated in the full range of inter-agency mechanisms for setting out the guidelines for system-wide follow-up to international conferences. This includes the Administrative Committee on Coordination Statement on Gender, providing the collective views of the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system to the special session convened in New York in June 2000. In March 2000, the Committee approved Guidelines and Information for the Resident Coordinator System, a formal note to the resident coordinator system on field-level follow-up to the global conferences, and particularly the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, building on an earlier guidance note formulated by UNDG members.

59. UNICEF participated in the development by the Committee of an action strategy and matrix for collaborative action by the United Nations system for the halving of extreme poverty. This strategy has now been transmitted to country teams to underpin their work on the CCA, the UNDAF and the support of the United Nations system to the PRSP process.

60. UNICEF follow-up to the World Education Forum held in April 2000 is outlined in an executive directive sent to all offices. UNICEF has focused on several key areas. In the education of young children, the priority is to equip parents and other caregivers with the skills and knowledge needed to ensure that their children grow up healthy and develop to their full potential. This entails a comprehensive communication and education strategy focused on parents and caregivers. For older pre-school-age children, country offices are encouraged to assist in the development of community-based and community-supported early childhood development and learning programmes.

61. Activities include improving the quality of education for all children so that learning environments are effective, healthy, protective and gender-sensitive,

and each child attains a desired level of achievement upon completion of the basic education cycle. Education of girls is a distinct challenge, so as to ensure their full and equal access to, and achievement in, basic education and to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination in classrooms, schools and education systems in general.

62. For excluded children, the priority is to ensure their enrolment so they complete a basic education. Working children represent a particular global priority. Enabling children to attend school and learn is the best strategy for preventing child labour. In addition, as UNICEF develops its strategies addressing adolescents, there will be a need to support innovative ways of assuring second-chance learning opportunities for young people who have missed out on basic education.

63. For children affected by crisis, violence, instability and HIV/AIDS, the focus is on ensuring they have safe, stable learning environments and gain the knowledge, skills and values needed to respond to their challenges. UNICEF gives special priority to ensuring continued schooling, or early resumption of schooling, for children caught in situations of armed conflict or other emergencies. UNICEF is also committed to educating young people about HIV/AIDS and, by helping to minimize the impact of AIDS on education systems, to ensure continued schooling for AIDS-affected children and AIDS orphans.

64. Achieving education goals will require a synergy with other country programming components. These include early childhood care and development, gender equality, HIV/AIDS strategies, child health, nutrition, water supply, environmental sanitation and hygiene education.

65. At every step, country offices have been requested to determine their role in basic education, in consultation with other partner institutions and organizations, both national and international. Priority is being given to strengthening partnerships through the CCA/UNDAF and other frameworks. Within the Dakar Framework for Action, and in collaboration with UNESCO and other partners, UNICEF is reviewing and strengthening the education components of country programmes so as to better support Governments in implementing their Education for All plans. Working with Governments, UNESCO and other United Nations agencies, the World Bank and civil society partners, UNICEF will provide support and, where necessary, leadership in the development of EFA forums and plans, preferably in the context of broader education system reform and sectoral and multisectoral development strategies (e.g., SIPs, SWAPs, PRSPs and debt relief strategies).

66. UNICEF activities in support of the special session to review progress since the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) included the launch of the booklet entitled "Poverty Reduction Begins with Children", the organization of two panel discussions with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank, respectively, and contributing to the presentation of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "A Better World for All". The thrust of the UNICEF position is that poverty reduction must begin with children, so as to prevent life-long damage to their minds and bodies. No other age group is more likely to live in poverty and no other investment will be more effective and efficient than investment in basic social services and child protection.

67. The panel on "Community-Based Solutions to Poverty Reduction" emphasized that serious problems arise from institutional weaknesses in implementing anti-poverty programmes and delivering basic social services. Many programmes suffer from top-down planning and lack of ownership. Experience has shown that effective community participation can greatly help to overcome these problems and significantly enhance the effectiveness of public resources. The panel on child labour emphasized how working children are denied their rights. Strategies and actions that have proven successful in reducing child labour were presented.

68. UNICEF continues as lead agency within the United Nations system to support the implementation of the 20/20 Initiative. Studies have been prepared in 40 countries to assess what percentage of social budgets and official development assistance is allocated to basic social services. The precepts of the 20/20 Initiative have become better known and understood. The principle that it encapsulates — joint and equal partnership between donor and developing countries in the drive to accelerate improvements in human well-being and capacity — has gained legitimacy as an essential element in the overall strategy to reduce poverty.

69. Within the wide range of activities contained in the International Conference on Population and

Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, the programmatic response of UNICEF is based on several main principles: promotion of women's health and safe motherhood so as to achieve a rapid and substantial reduction in maternal morbidity and mortality, and to reduce the differences observed between developing and developed countries and within countries; on the basis of a commitment to women's health and well-being, reduction of the number of deaths and morbidity from unsafe abortion; and vast improvement in the health and nutritional status of women, especially pregnant and nursing women.

70. UNICEF has worked to these ends within a network of strong partnerships at global, regional, country and headquarters levels — with sister United Nations agencies (particularly WHO and UNFPA) and with Governments, donor agencies, the World Bank and regional banks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including women's groups. With an institution-wide commitment to reducing maternal mortality, including support for safe motherhood programs, UNICEF has developed an appropriate in-house culture through: (a) training workshops in the best strategies for reducing maternal mortality, involving field office staff and staff from Governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, and NGOs; (b) development of guidelines to monitor the use, availability and quality of essential obstetric services; (c) redefinition and promotion of safe motherhood in the context of rights; (d) increased understanding and awareness of reproductive health issues among UNICEF staff; and (e) inclusion of programming interventions in the organization policy guidelines to address sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, violence against women, and the multiple violations of women's rights in the home and in society at large.

71. Programme interventions have focused on several key areas. Within the primary health care sector, in response to the increasing death toll among young children and pregnant women caused by malaria, UNICEF expanded activities to combat this deadly infection, and is an active participant in the WHO Roll Back Malaria initiative. At the country level, activities emphasize advocacy and cooperation with Governments in developing rational drug policies; improving access to and availability of anti-malarial drugs; the implementation of insecticide-treated bed net programs, focusing on strategies for net financing, distribution and pretreatment; the integration of malaria-control activities into health services at the peripheral level; and the provision of Programme support for planning, training, monitoring and evaluation. Over 25 country programmes now include malaria-related projects, the majority in the West and Central Africa and the Eastern and Southern Africa regions.

72. In the area of safe motherhood, UNICEF is working to create "women-friendly" societies. Actions at several levels include promoting the concept of safe motherhood as a social justice issue, encouraging Governments to make sustained investments in service provision; working with the media to raise public awareness of the problem; establishing "women-friendly health services" in partnership with national and local government, and working with communities to provide high-quality care to mothers and their infants; and building "women-friendly communities" in which husbands, mothers and mothers-in-law, families and neighbours help women make choices and take actions to protect their life and good health.

73. As a partner in the midwifery movement, UNICEF works to ensure that trained midwives are available to assist all deliveries. Country programmes support professionalizing delivery care by focusing on the training of midwives and doctors and upgrading the skills of community midwives; establishing ties with midwives' associations in several countries in Asia and Africa; helping to create a supportive environment for the effective deployment of midwives, particularly in underserved areas; and promoting midwifery and the midwifery movement through conferences, consultations and dialogues at headquarters and in the field. UNICEF emphasizes that training of traditional birth attendants (TBAs) can be effective only when supported by an external mechanism for referral, supervision, monitoring and evaluation.

74. Field offices, including in Ghana and Indonesia, are facilitating the training of community midwives so they become fully certified and skilled. In Nigeria, UNICEF has trained and provided delivery kits to more than 2,000 village-based TBAs. In addition, a technical assistance programme, undertaken in collaboration with the Lagos Island Association of TBAs, is yielding valuable data on ways to improve the quality of care provided by TBAs. Programmes to assure quality of care are being established through TBA professional associations.

75. In the area of integrated reproductive health care, the ICPD Programme of Action calls for universal access to reproductive health care by 2015. For UNICEF programmes, this has included quality maternal and neonatal care; prevention of STIs; protection against sexual violence; and health education for adolescents.

76. In Eastern Africa, UNICEF has developed health promotion projects that address the needs, including nutritional needs, of girls and young women. In West Africa, a solid base has been established by field offices for the provision of reproductive health care through community participation in financing and managing women-friendly health services. In India, UNICEF co-sponsored, with the Swedish International Development Authority, a groundbreaking workshop to determine what reproductive health is and how to build reproductive health services, along with an assessment of the current state of services. This initiative supported the Government of India in its promulgation of a national population policy based on ICPD principles. In Bolivia, UNICEF supported the Government in improving the quality of maternal and child health services and women's access to them, particularly within indigenous populations.

77. The tracking of children's health and maternal mortality is a key aspect of monitoring ICPD goals, and of the implementation of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In collaboration with WHO, UNFPA, UNESCO and the United Nations Statistical Division, UNICEF has been helping countries to develop systems to gather, analyse and use data on women's health and on the impact of interventions to improve maternal and child health, nutrition, and survival, and to build the statistical base required for reporting on progress towards agreed goals.

78. UNICEF, in collaboration with WHO and UNFPA, issued the Guidelines for Monitoring the Availability and Use of Obstetric Services. The guidelines propose a set of process indicators to use and provide options for collecting data. In Egypt, the Ministry of Health and Population used the guidelines in a study looking at maternal deaths. This study demonstrated the power of process indicators in uncovering and understanding problems in maternal health services and in formulating strategies for improvement. In Mali, use of the guidelines was helpful in programming; the number of women with complications who were referred to appropriate levels of care increased with the establishment of simple communication and transportation systems, a pre-packed surgical kit for emergencies and cost-sharing between communities and health systems.

79. In preparing for the five-year review of the Fourth World Conference on Women Platform for Action at the Special Session of the General Assembly in June 2000, UNICEF headquarters and field offices collaborated closely with the United Nations system, national government agencies and NGOs, through support to: (a) activities for building partnerships to advance the rights of women and girls at the regional preparatory conferences, NGO meetings and the Preparatory Committee meeting in March 2000; (b) reviews of progress; (c) publications showcasing good practices and special concerns; (d) advocacy events on special themes and regional concerns; and (e) expansion of existing NGO networks, with a specific focus on the mission of UNICEF.

80. At the Special Session, having completed a review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, UNICEF emphasized several themes: gender equality starts early; actions targeting the special needs of girls are required; women's rights and girls' rights are interdependent; children's rights cannot be achieved without girls' rights; and community partnerships are needed to end violence and prevent HIV/AIDS. The Executive Director addressed the General Assembly and urged stronger commitments to implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, emphasizing the centrality of the rights of women and girls to development. She called attention to actions for girls' education and for addressing the gender dimension of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and growing armed conflict. UNICEF, in collaboration with NGOs and agencies of the United Nations system, supported the organization of special events on these themes and on such topics as strategies for delaying marriage of girls; ending female genital mutilation; combating sexual exploitation of girls; and identifying the role of men as partners in ending violence. It gave particular attention to the participation of adolescent girls and young women from seven countries by providing them opportunities to voice their concerns and make visible their capacity to represent their rights and needs in global forums.

81. Following the Special Session, the UNICEF Executive Board endorsed a follow-up process to support implementation of the Platform for Action, identifying three priority areas: girls' education; the health of girls, adolescents girls and women; and children's and women's rights. Support for the implementation of the Platform has provided new opportunities for advocacy and programmes for advancing the equal rights of women and girls and in the achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children. At the country level, follow-up actions complement and support follow-up to the other world conferences, particularly ICPD and WSSD.

82. The Special Session provided significant support for UNICEF activities, in particular through the momentum generated by the preparatory process, through outcomes related to reducing gender gaps in education, and through an endorsement of the outcomes of the World Education Forum. The implications of globalization, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, adolescent health and armed conflict were considered in depth, and specific actions were identified. New agreements were reached on actions for ending violence against women and girls, and trafficking and sexual exploitation of girls. Outcomes were significant in terms of the recognition of the need for gender-specific actions by a range of actors at all levels, from the policy and legislative level to the family environment. UNICEF partnerships with Governments and NGOs were strengthened regarding links between women's and children's rights and elimination of gender-based discrimination in childhood.

A. Problems and lessons learned

83. The coordinated follow-up to conferences and summits under the overarching goal of poverty eradication has created a very wide set of goals and targets. Translation of these into specific areas of action and effective implementation at the country level, and the achievement of optimum and measurable results, generally requires addressing themes at a disaggregated level. Once the broad parameters have been set, it is essential that follow-up take place under a lead agency at the global level and through appropriate theme groups with knowledgeable and effective leadership at the country level. Successful theme groups combine the participation of all relevant stakeholders, particularly Governments; the leadership of an agency with technical capacity and competence; and group leaders with knowledge, commitment and management skills.

84. The exchange of results and best practices among different country teams is essential, as are the development of a consistent set of indicators within the context of the CCA process and the more timely sharing of experiences through improved reporting. The development of a common set of indicators as part of the CCA process, and of guidelines that ensure more consistent reporting by resident coordinators and by UNICEF representatives, is allowing for a more meaningful assessment of progress in achieving conference goals.

85. Successful conference follow-up requires appropriate political support and sufficient financial resources. In too many cases, financial support, and its volume, consistency and reliability, have failed to match the expectations created by the conferences. In this regard, the 20/20 Initiative and the PRSPs, as part of the enhanced HIPC process, are very positive developments.

B. Recommendations

86. The Council may wish to:

(a) *Note* the progress made in both the integrated follow up to conferences and the coordinated conference-specific follow-up under appropriate lead agencies;

(b) *Re-emphasize* the use of theme groups, taking into account the need for crosscutting themes and leadership based on technical skills and comparative advantage;

(c) *Call upon* Governments to provide leadership for the follow-up to conferences and for all stakeholders, including bilateral donors, to participate actively in this process;

(d) *Call for* the annual reports of the resident coordinator and of the individual agencies to take fully into account their roles in the follow-up to conferences;

(e) *Re-emphasize* the importance of monitoring the achievement of all conference goals;

(f) *Call upon* Member States to make available adequate resources for the full implementation of conference plans of action and of UNDAFs, including

through the HIPC process and other innovative mechanisms such as the 20/20 Initiative.

III. Humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

87. Although the Economic and Social Council was unable to agree on a substantive concluding document at its session of 2000, UNICEF has continued its active role in advocating for children's concerns in conflict and post-conflict situations and in humanitarian operations. UNICEF staff worked closely with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and other United Nations colleagues in the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on children and armed conflict (S/2000/712 of July 2000); the UNICEF Executive Director participated in the subsequent Security Council debate. Key issues highlighted by the organization included HIV/AIDS, education and accountability.

88. UNICEF supported preparations for the International Conference on War-Affected Children held in Winnipeg, Canada, in September 2000, and in the event itself. It is hoped that many of the recommendations and commitments made at the conference will be endorsed by the General Assembly Special Session on Children in September 2001.

89. UNICEF continues to work, through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (which the UNICEF Executive Director currently chairs) and its various reference groups, on a number of important policy issues including small arms, the humanitarian impact of sanctions, human rights, and humanitarian action and gender. The focus on these issues provides an important opportunity to promote improved coordination among United Nations agencies and NGOs.

90. UNICEF is participating in the newly established "Senior Inter-Agency Network to Reinforce the Operational Response to Situations of Internal Displacement", which was established in July 2000. The Network carried out a mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea in October and further missions are planned. UNICEF regards the network as an important opportunity for the United Nations system to review its coordination and capacity to protect and assist internally displaced persons at country level. UNICEF has also worked closely with the Representative of the Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons to provide guidelines to all IASC members on the integration of IDP concerns in the CAP process.

91. During 2000, UNICEF used its Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) to retain emergency response capacity in key emergencies where external resources were slowly disbursed or where there were opportunities to accelerate programmes. The EPF was used in Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and the West Bank and Gaza. Additionally, UNICEF accessed funding from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) to jumpstart emergency actions for children and women affected by the drought in the countries of the Horn of Africa. Another major area of involvement during the year was addressing the natural disasters that hit southern Africa (extensive flooding in Madagascar and Mozambique), and drought in Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

92. UNICEF has strengthened its collaboration in key areas with a number of partners during the last year. In nutrition, work with WFP in Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone is framed through a global memorandum of understanding that is modified to the local situation. The clarity thus provided has enabled the United Nations to provide a more timely and effective response.

93. Staff security remained an overriding concern, with deliberate attacks on United Nations system staff and premises continuing unabated, and six staff members murdered in the six months leading up to November. Following reviews of security systems in the field and at headquarters, the Secretary-General submitted recommendations for improving security with costs on the order of $30 million per year. At its fall session, ACC members adopted a joint statement that called upon executive heads to include the issue of staff security in their discussions with Member States, including bringing to justice the perpetrators of attacks on United Nations personnel. In addition, the declaration urged Member States to provide necessary financial resources within the United Nations budget and those of all United Nations organizations.

Part two
Summary of the deliberations of the Executive Board on the annual report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council*

8. In introducing the report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council (E/ICEF/2001/4 (Part I)), the Director, Office of United Nations Affairs and External Relations, addressed issues arising from decisions and discussions at the July 2000 session of the Council, and the follow-up undertaken by UNICEF. He stated that the report followed a common format used by UNDP, UNFPA and WFP, and was structured so that issues were addressed in terms of status, problems, lessons learned and recommendations for action. This report, and those of the other United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Executive Committee members, would once again serve as input to the consolidated issues paper the UNDG prepared for the Council.

9. The report also dealt with the coordinated follow-up to conferences, as well as with the specific "plus-five" meetings of the past year, including the World Education Forum in Dakar, the World Summit for Social Development + 5, the International Conference on Population and Development + 5, and the Fourth World Conference on Women + 5. The section on humanitarian and disaster relief assistance provided an overview of UNICEF activities in the humanitarian area, as related to issues of inter-agency collaboration.

10. Under this agenda item, the Board also had before it a note on the UNICEF response to reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) (E/ICEF/2001/5). The Director stated that over the last six months, UNICEF had had extensive discussions with JIU to establish a more systematic mechanism for follow-up, and to report on how JIU recommendations and observations had been incorporated into the work and operations of UNICEF. The draft decision included in the note had been prepared following consultation with JIU.

11. The Director provided an information note on the Millennium Summit and Assembly, which highlighted the references to issues of direct relevance to UNICEF. He drew delegations' attention to the fact that, particularly in the Summit and the Millennium Assembly statements, considerable attention was paid to children's issues and child rights. The Millennium Declaration called for significant action with respect to children.

12. A number of delegations commended the secretariat on the content, format and structure of the report, calling it concise and comprehensive. Some delegations made recommendations for future reports, including requesting additional information on capacity-building, gender mainstreaming in programmes and a greater focus on lessons learned. Welcoming the note on JIU reports, a few delegations recommended that future sessions of the Executive Board allocate sufficient time for an in-depth discussion.

13. Some delegations expressed their concern about staff security, with one stating that perpetrators should be brought to justice. Many speakers encouraged Governments to contribute to the cost of ensuring staff security.

14. UNICEF efforts in the Girls' Education Initiative of the Secretary-General were highly commended by a number of delegations. Some of them stressed the need for a clear division of labour between UNICEF and UNESCO on the Initiative, as well as in follow-up to the World Education Forum in Dakar. Regarding follow-up to international conferences, many delegations commended the work being done on both global and national levels, and encouraged UNICEF to continue to give follow-up high priority.

15. Strong support was shown for the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) process. Many delegations encouraged greater cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, in particular with regard to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). A request was made that the report of the Executive Director in 2002 include an analysis of the results and evaluation of the CCAs/UNDAFs. One delegation asked if UNICEF had found the process valuable, while another stressed the importance of bringing Governments fully into the process.

* Excerpt from the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its first regular session of 2001. The complete report was issued as document E/2001/34 (Part I).

16. A number of delegations expressed concern about the decline in core resources and the impact this decline would have on programmes. One delegation commended UNICEF fund-raising activities.

17. Many delegations commented on the low number of resident coordinators from agencies other than UNDP. They noted, however, the improved cooperation at the country level and the harmonized administrative guidelines being used by UNDG members. The role of UNICEF in humanitarian and disaster relief was commended by a number of Governments. One delegation cautioned, however, that the organization should not lose its focus on poverty and the impact on children.

18. A number of delegations noted their intention to participate fully in the second substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session on Children. One delegation expressed his appreciation for the information note on the Millennium Summit and Assembly, and was pleased that the important goals contained in the Declaration were not being ignored.

19. Responding to the interventions, the Director stated that comments and suggestions for improvements would be included in the report of the Executive Director in 2002. Concerning the CCA/UNDAF and programming processes, he reported that 20 CCAs/UNDAFs had been completed, with several others nearing completion. Guidelines — including sector-specific guidelines — had been established, programme cycles had been harmonized and joint programmes were ongoing. Within the context of the triennial comprehensive policy review, there would be an external evaluation of the impact of the UNDAF. Questionnaires had been sent to all programme and donor country Governments, country teams and United Nations agencies. The outcome would serve to focus much of UNICEF work for the next three years.

20. The Director informed the Board that the UNDG had been expanded to include WHO and UNESCO. He emphasized that there was good collaboration at the country level among all stakeholders — Governments, the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, bilateral organizations and civil society. To a certain extent, this had long been the case; the challenge now was to draw on the best experiences and apply them more widely.

21. The Director stated that follow-up to international conferences was a very important aspect of the work of UNICEF and the rest of the United Nations system. The goals and targets of these conferences had given the United Nations an overall framework and context, and had made it possible to create the CCA/UNDAF mechanism. Although there was talk of "conference fatigue", there remained new issues, such as HIV/AIDS, that had not been adequately addressed. He noted that cooperation with the World Bank has been good and that the Bank was a signatory to 10 of 20 UNDAFs. UNICEF country offices had been instructed to participate actively in PRSPs.

22. The Executive Director added that discussions had been held with the UNDG regarding PRSPs, and a new working group would comprise members from the UNDG and the World Bank. She stated that the selection of resident coordinators was improving. There was now an assessment mechanism and job description, but it was still a work in progress. Although the numbers were low, there were, in fact, women resident coordinators.

23. Regarding the comment that there were too many follow-up conferences, she reminded delegations that the conferences were held in response to requests by Member States. She emphasized that humanitarian work did not detract from UNICEF work for children. There was an increasingly unstable environment worldwide in which UNICEF could play a critical role because it was in countries before, during and after crises. (See E/ICEF/2001/6 (Part I), annex II, decision 2001/3, for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.)